

1. A method for processing a second call leg directed to a subscriber that is participating in a first call, the method comprising:

receiving the second call leg directed to the subscriber;

determining that the subscriber subscribes to a call answering and holding feature;

determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold;

transmitting a message to a calling party associated with the second call leg offering to place the second call leg on hold if the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold;

receiving an indication that the calling party accepts the offer to be placed on hold if the message to the calling party is transmitted;

placing the second call leg on hold if the indication that the calling party accepts the offer is received; and

indicating to the subscriber that the second call leg is available, if at the time of indication, the second call leg is available.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein indicating to the subscriber that the second call leg is available occurs before transmitting the message to the calling party associated with the second call leg.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold comprises:

receiving an indication that the subscriber does not desire that the second call leg be placed on hold, therefore, not transmitting the message to the calling party associated with the second call leg offering to place the second call leg on hold.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold comprises:

receiving a message selection indication from the subscriber, thereby receiving an indication that the subscriber does desire that the second call leg be placed on hold;

wherein transmitting the message to the calling party associated with the second call leg comprises:

transmitting a customized message to the calling party based on the received message selection indication.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold comprises:

receiving a message selection indication from the subscriber, thereby receiving an indication that the subscriber does desire that the second call leg be placed on hold;

determining an identity of the calling party;

wherein transmitting the message to the calling party associated with the second call leg comprises:

transmitting a customized message to the calling party based on the received message selection indication and the determined identity of the calling party.

6. The method of claim 2 wherein determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold comprises:

determining and identity of the calling party;

transmitting the determined identity of the calling party to the subscriber;

receiving a message selection indication from the subscriber, thereby receiving an indication that the subscriber does desire that the second call leg be placed on hold;

wherein transmitting the message to the calling party associated with the second call leg comprises:

transmitting a customized message to the calling party based on the received message selection indication and the determined identity of the calling party.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold comprises:

receiving information from a subscriber profile of the subscriber indicating that the subscriber desires to place on hold all second calls received while the subscriber is participating in any other call.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold comprises:

receiving information from a subscriber profile of the subscriber indicating that the subscriber desires to place on hold only second calls associated with potential callers included in a predefined list of potential callers;

determining an identity associated with a caller associated with the second call leg; and,

determining if the identity associated with the caller is included in the predefined list of potential callers, thereby determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold.

9. The method of claim 2 wherein transmitting a customized message to the calling party based on the received message selection indication and the determined identity of the calling party comprises:

receiving a list of one or more potential callers, each listed potential caller being associated with at least one predefined message, the at least one predefined message being associated with a particular message selection indication;

determining that the determined identity of the calling party matches an identity of one of the listed potential callers; and,

transmitting a selected one of the at least one predefined messages associated with the matching listed potential caller, the selected one of the at least one predefined messages being associated with the received message selection indication from the subscriber.

10. The method of claim 2 wherein transmitting a customized message to the calling party based on the received message selection indication and the determined identity of the calling party comprises:

receiving a list of one or more predefined default messages, the one or more predefined default messages being associated with a particular message selection indication;

determining that the determined identity of the calling party does not match an identity of one of the listed potential callers; and

transmitting a selected one of the at least one predefined default messages, the selected one of the at least one predefined default messages being associated with the received message selection indication from the subscriber.

11. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

determining that the participation of the subscriber in the first call has ended; and,

connecting the second call leg to user equipment of the subscriber.

12. A method for processing a second call leg directed to a subscriber that is participating in a first call, the method comprising:

receiving the second call leg at an MSC serving the subscriber;

receiving subscriber profile information associated with the subscriber at the MSC;

determining, from the received subscriber profile information, if services provided to the subscriber include a call answering and holding feature;

transmitting an indication to the subscriber that the second call leg is available if the services provided to the subscriber include the call answering and holding feature;

processing the second call leg without call answering and hold functions if the services provided to the subscriber do not include the call answering and holding feature;

receiving a call treatment indication from the subscriber if the indication that the second call leg is available was transmitted;

processing the second call leg without call answering and hold functions if the call treatment indication from the subscriber so directs;

transmitting a default message to a caller associated with the second call leg if the call treatment indication so directs;

transmitting a selected message from one or more predefined messages included in the subscriber profile information to the caller associated with the second call leg if the call treatment indication so directs;

receiving an election indication from the caller associated with the second call leg; and,

placing the second call leg on hold if the received election indication so directs.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein transmitting the indication to the subscriber that the second call leg is available comprises:

determining an identity of a calling party associated with the second call leg; and,

transmitting an indication of the identity of the calling party to the subscriber.

14. The method of claim 12 wherein transmitting the selected message comprises:

determining an identity of a caller associated with the second call leg; and,

transmitting a message selected based on the identity of the caller and the received call treatment indication.

15. The method of claim 12 wherein receiving the call treatment indication comprises receiving a message based on key presses made on a keyboard of user equipment of the subscriber, thereby indicating selected message.

16. The method of claim 12 wherein receiving the call treatment indication comprises receiving no response from the subscriber, thereby indicating default call treatment.

17. A system for processing a second call leg directed to a subscriber that is participating in a first call, the system comprising:

means for receiving the second call leg directed to the subscriber;

means for determining that the subscriber subscribes to a call answering and holding feature;

means for determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold;

means for transmitting a message to a calling party associated with the second call leg offering to place the second call leg on hold if the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold;

means for receiving an indication that the calling party accepts the offer to be placed on hold if the message to the calling party is transmitted;

means for placing the second call leg on hold if the indication that the calling party accepts the offer is received; and

means for indicating to the subscriber that the second call leg is available, if at the time of indication, the second call leg is available.

18. The system of claim 17 wherein the means for indicating to the subscriber that the second call leg is available is operative before the means for transmitting the message to the calling party associated with the second call leg.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein the means for determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold comprises:

means for receiving an indication that the subscriber does not desire that the second call leg be placed on hold and therefore preventing the transmission of the message to a calling party associated with the second call leg offering to place the second call leg on hold.

20. The system of claim 18 wherein the means for determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold comprises:

means for receiving a message selection indication from the subscriber, thereby receiving an indication that the subscriber does desire that the second call leg be placed on hold;

wherein the means for transmitting the message to the calling party associated with the second call leg comprises:

means for transmitting a customized message to the calling party based on the received message selection indication.

21. The system of claim 18 wherein the means for determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold comprises:

means for receiving a message selection indication from the subscriber, thereby receiving an indication that the subscriber does desire that the second call leg be placed on hold;

means for determining an identity of the calling party;

wherein the means for transmitting the message to the calling party associated with the second call leg comprises:

means for transmitting a customized message to the calling party based on the received message selection indication and the determined identity of the calling party.

22. The system of claim 17 wherein the means for determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold comprises:

means for determining an identity of the calling party;

means for transmitting the determined identity of the calling party to the subscriber;

means for receiving a message selection indication from the subscriber, thereby receiving an indication that the subscriber does desire that the second call leg be placed on hold;

wherein the means for transmitting the message to the calling party associated with the second call leg comprises:

means for transmitting a customized message to the calling party based on the received message selection indication and the determined identity of the calling party.

23. The system of claim 17 wherein the means for determining whether the subscriber desires to place the second call leg on hold comprises:

means for receiving information from a subscriber profile of the subscriber indicating that the subscriber desires to place on hold all second calls received while the subscriber is participating in any other call.

24. The system of claim 18 wherein transmitting a customized message to the calling party based on the received message selection indication and the determined identity of the calling party comprises:

means for receiving a list of one or more potential callers, each listed potential caller being associated with at least one predefined message, the at least one predefined message being associated with a particular message selection indication;

means for determining that the determined identity of the calling party matches an identity of one of the listed potential callers; and,

means for transmitting a selected one of the at least one predefined messages associated with the matching listed potential caller, the selected one of the at least one predefined messages being associated with the received message selection indication from the subscriber.

25. The system of claim 18 wherein the means for transmitting a customized message to the calling party based on the received message selection indication and the determined identity of the calling party comprises:

means for receiving a list of one or more predefined default messages, the one or more predefined default messages being associated with a particular message selection indication;

means for determining that the determined identity of the calling party does not match an identity of one of the listed potential callers; and

means for transmitting a selected one of the at least one predefined default messages, the selected one of the at least one predefined default messages being associated with the received message selection indication from the subscriber.

26. The system of claim 16 further comprising:

means for determining that the participation of the subscriber in the first call has ended; and,

means for connecting the second call leg to user equipment of the subscriber.

27. A system for processing a second call leg directed to a subscriber that is participating in a first call, the system comprising:

a profile interpreter operative to receive a subscriber profile, determine if the subscriber subscribes to a call answering and holding feature, determine

settings of call answering and holding feature configuration parameters, and provide access to one or more messages stored in the subscriber profile;

a subscriber interface operative to transmit information regarding the second call leg to the subscriber according to the configuration parameter setting, and to receive and interpret indications from the subscriber regarding call treatment directions;

a second caller interface operative to signal a second caller associated with the second call leg according to the configuration parameters and/or the call treatment indications and to receive calling party call treatment indications from the second caller; and,

a hold manager operative to place the second call leg on hold according to the configuration parameters, the subscriber call treatment directions, and/or the calling party call treatment indications.

28. The system of claim 27 wherein the subscriber interface is operative to transmit calling line identification information to the subscriber regarding second call leg.

29. The system of claim 27 wherein the subscriber interface is operative to receive a message selection indication from the subscriber regarding a message to be transmitted to the second caller.

30. The system of claim 27 wherein the second caller interface is operative to transmit a message to the second caller based on an indication received from the subscriber and calling line identification information regarding the second call leg.

31. The system of claim 30 wherein the profile interface and the second caller interface cooperate to compare the calling line identification information to information included in a predefined list of potential callers and to select the transmitted message based on whether or not an entry in the list of potential callers includes information matching the calling line identification information.